

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 27 are pending in the case.

Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 5 through 7, 12, 13, 16 through 18, 22 through 24 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by PCT International Publication No. WO 01/42894 (Larson). Examiner has rejected claims 8 through 11, 19 through 21, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Larson in view of USPN 6,832,351 (Bottum).

Applicant is enclosing herewith a Declaration under Rule § 1.131 to overcome the rejections.

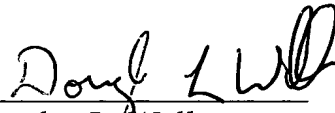
Applicant notes that Larson was first published on June 14, 2001. The Declaration under Rule § 1.131 shows conception of the present invention before June 14, 2001. The present case was filed on July 26, 2001. Applicant notes that the preparation of a patent application was diligently performed during this interval.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this Amendment has placed the present case in condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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February 15, 2006
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